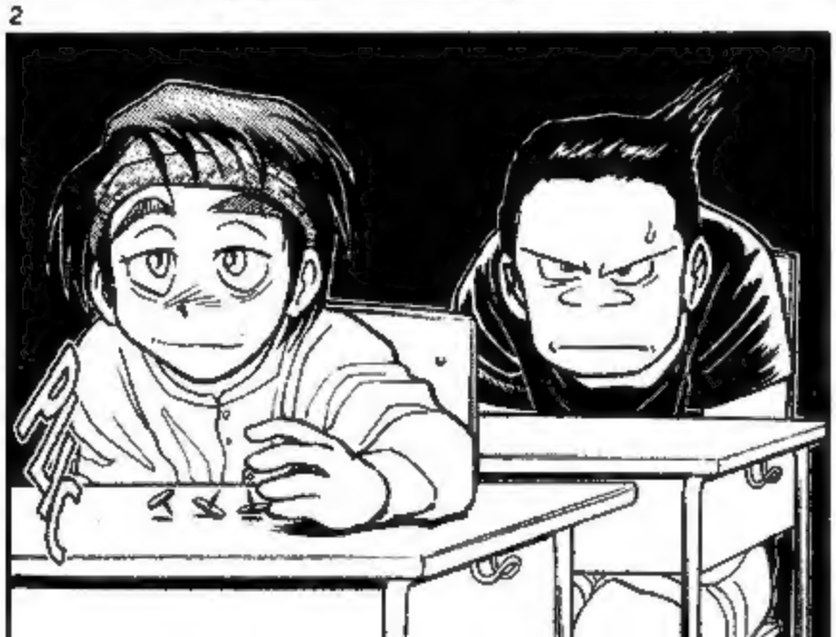
ACT II : CIRCUS * DEPARTURE

CHAPTER ONE "A NEW ACT BEGINS"

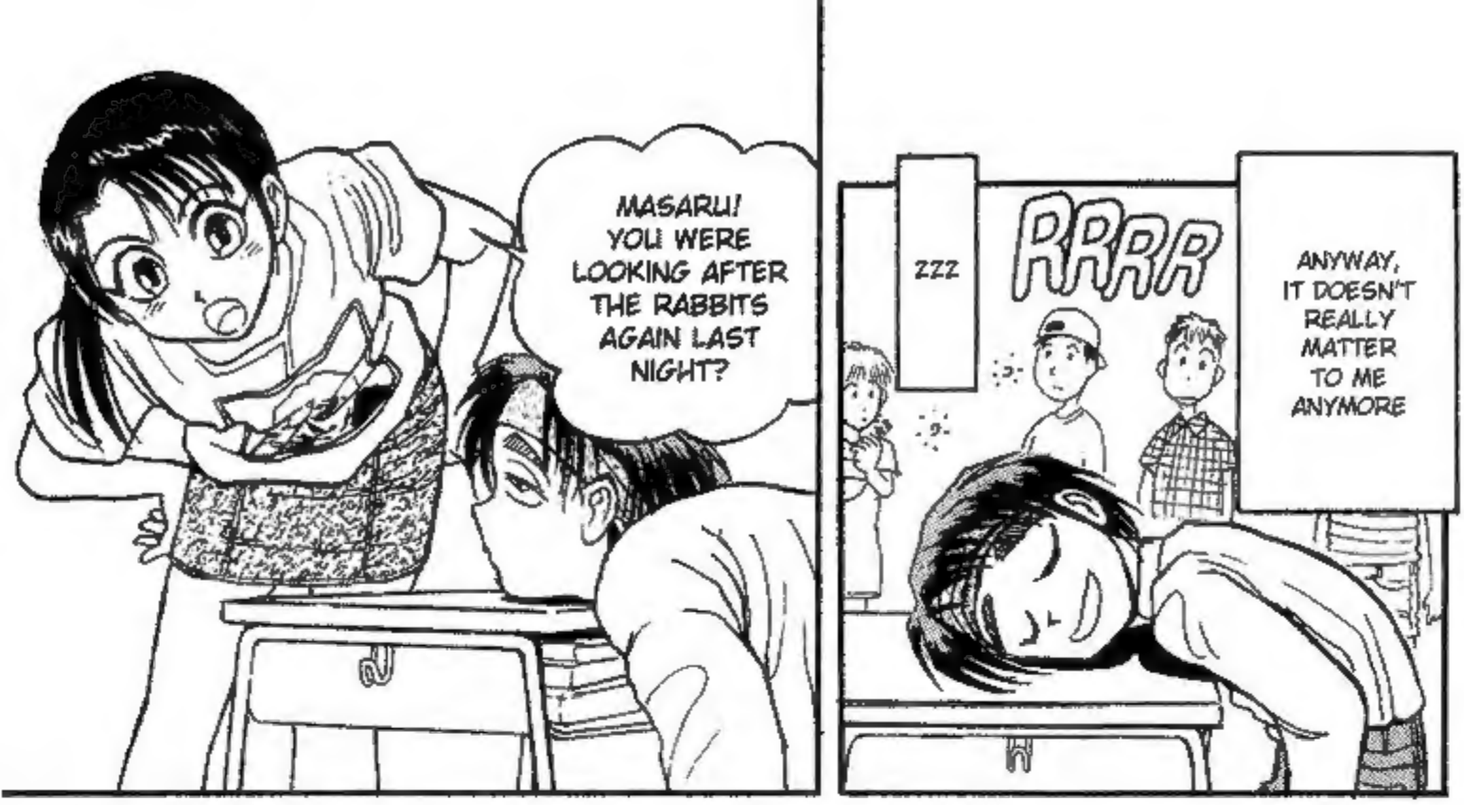
HELLO ...
IT'S ALREADY BEEN TWO WEEKS SINCE I BEGAN SCHOOL AGAIN
HI!
HI!
ECOLE PRIMAIRE PUBLIQUE

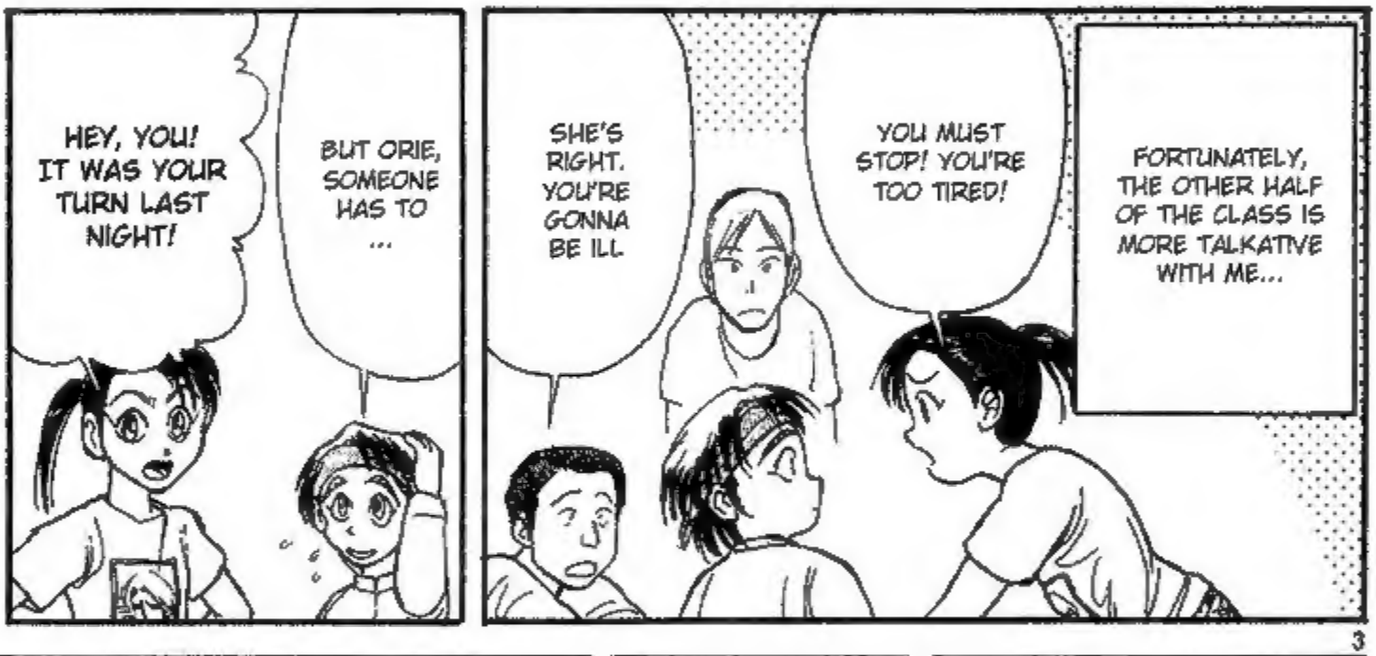
I'M NOT BEING TEASED LIKE I USED TO BE, BUT HALF OF THE CLASS IS STILL AVOIDING ME ...

OUCH!
ARE THEY AFRAID OF ATSUSHI? OR MAYBE THEY DON'T LIKE ME BECAUSE I'M FROM A VERY WEALTHY FAMILY ...


PUF

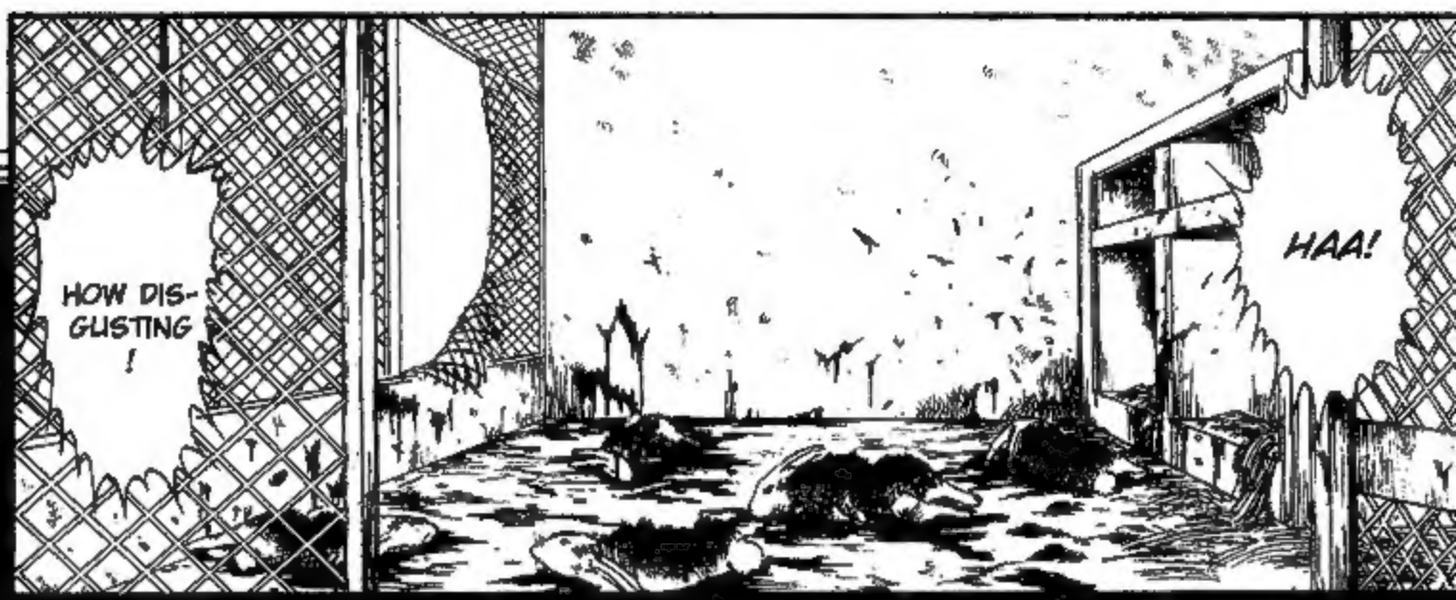
HI, EVERYONE ...
BUT NOW I'M CONSTANTLY TIRED
WHEW


MASARU! YOU WERE LOOKING AFTER THE RABBITS AGAIN LAST NIGHT?
ZZZ
RRRR
ANYWAY, IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER TO ME ANYMORE


HEY, YOU! IT WAS YOUR TURN LAST NIGHT!
BUT ORIE, SOMEONE HAS TO ...
SHE'S RIGHT. YOU'RE GONNA BE ILL
YOU MUST STOP! YOU'RE TOO TIRED!
FORTUNATELY, THE OTHER HALF OF THE CLASS IS MORE TALKATIVE WITH ME...

UNLESS HE WOULDN'T BE ALLOWED TO SPEND THAT MONEY AS HE WISHES BECAUSE HE'S AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD
ANYWAY, HE CAN AFFORD TO HAVE BODYGUARDS! ... HE'S GOT SO MUCH MONEY!
COME ON! LET MASARU TAKE CARE OF IT BY HIMSELF !!
ATSUSHI ...
AT LEAST, YOU COULD BE GRATEFUL !
I CAN'T DO IT ...
I KNOW BUT ...

HERE IS HOW ALL THIS STORY BEGUN ...
WAIT ...
ORIE, REMEMBER I WAS THE ONE WHOOFFERED TO TAKE HIS PLACE! NOBODY FORCED ME!
DO YOU UNDER-STAND ?
SHUT UP!


HOW DIS-GUSTING !
HAA!

WE WERE AFRAID THAT SOMETHING SIMILAR WOULD HAPPEN TO OUR SCHOOL'S RABBITS ...
IF OUR RABBITS WERE TO DIE, IT'D BE YOUR FAULT !
Rabbits were killed in several schools ... in the midori neighbor-hood
APPARENTLY, SOMEONE WOULD CUT THE WIRE NETTING AT NIGHT AND LET DOGS GET INSIDE
RECENTLY, IN THREE SCHOOLS OF THE NEIGHBOR-HOOD, RABBITS THAT WERE RAISED BY PUPILS WERE KILLED AND THEIR CAGES RANSACKED ...

I REALLY CAN'T ...
IF I COME TO SCHOOL AT NIGHT, MY MOTHER'S GONNA BE MAD AT ME
YOU'RE THE ONE SUPPOSED TO BE IN CHARGE OF THE ANIMALS HERE!
YES, BUT ONLY BY DAY ! IF I GO OUT AT NIGHT MY PARENTS WILL PUNISH ME !
LISTEN, I'M GOING TO TAKE CARE OF THEM
AT NIGHT ...
I'LL LOOK AFTER THE RABBITS
HAH! ALWAYS TRYING TO BE SPECIAL !
OR COURSE, ATSUSHI GOT MAD AGAIN ...
AND, AS USUAL, KAZUO REMAINED SILENT
SOME PUPILS TOLD ME ...
I'LL TRY TO COME SOMETIMES

I'LL GO WITH YOU, MASTER
I'LL DO ALL YOUR HOMEWORK !
GOOD LUCK !
ACTUALLY, THEY WERE VERY KIND TO ME
THAT'S GREAT ! IT'S TRUE MANY THINGS HAVE CHANGED !
BUT WHAT PLEASED ME THE MOST WAS THAT ...
HMM ... I SEE ...
... SHIROGANE DIDN'T TRY TO CHANGE MY MIND
NO, IT'S GONNA BE ALRIGHT !
I ASKED IF SHE'D LIKE TO TAKE A COFFEE WITH ME AFTER CLASSES ... BUT SHE SAID NO!
SHE REALLY DOESN'T PAY ATTENTION TO US ...
THAT'S HER BROTHER?! ... DON'T TELL ME THAT'S HER BOY-FRIEND!

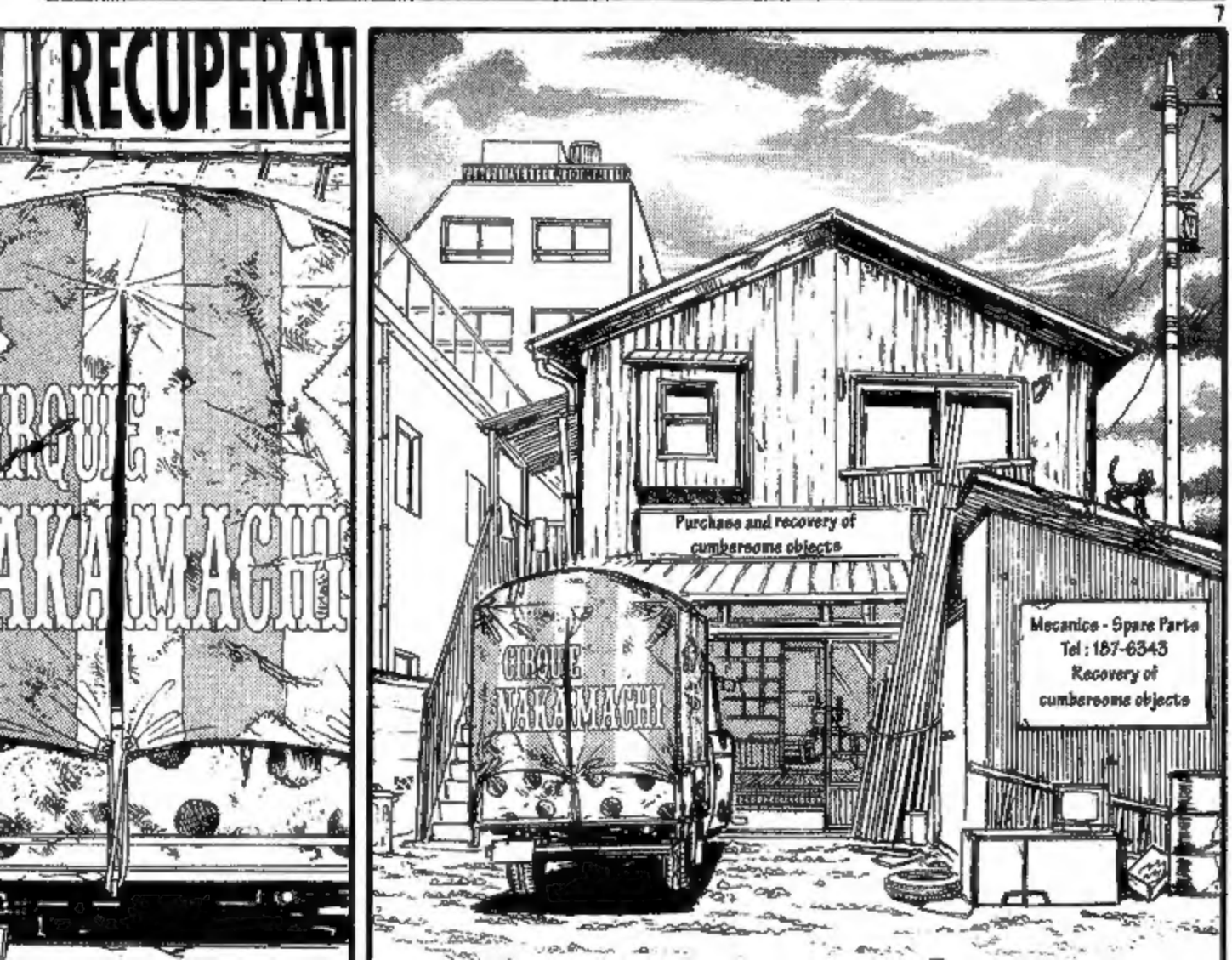
WHAT I WISH ABOVE EVERYTHING TODAY...

IS THAT SHE COULD ENJOY LIFE LIKE ANYONE ELSE

...
THAT SHE COULD LAUGH WITH THE GIRLS HER AGE
...

AND THAT SHE COULD FORGET A LITTLE HER MISSION TO PROTECT ME
....

BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO FOR THAT
...



UNIQUE
AU
MONDE
LE
MANGEUR
DE PIERRES
!
CIRQUE NAKAMACHI

HIRO, ARE YOU STILL ALIVE?
PHEW ... I'M SO TIRED !

BARELY, BRO...
WHAT ABOUT YOU NORI ?
YEP ... MORE OR LESS ...
SAINT

IT DOESN'T BOTHER ME AT ALL TO LIVE IN A CIRCUS ...
BUT GOING FROM ONE CIRCUS TO ANOTHER DOING PART TIME JOBS ... THAT'S TOO HARD!
TWO MONTHS WITH THE ITSUKI CIRCUS AND THEN TWO MONTHS WITH THE SUN CIRCUS ...
I'M GLAD TO BE BACK HOME!

HEY, I THOUGHT YOU LOVED MISTER MIZUYAMA, THE BOSS OF THE GRILL CIRCUS! YOU'RE ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT HIS QUALITIES !
SOMEONE TOLD ME THEIR BOSS, MISTER SHIBUNO, WAS A GREAT MAN
YOU CAN ASK THE HAPPY CIRCUS TO ADOPT YOU!

YEP... ME NEITHER, I'D NEVER DO THAT
DON
DON

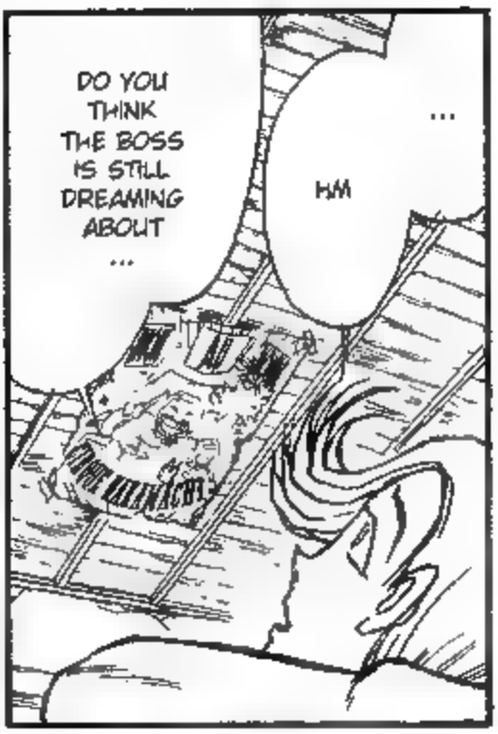
THAT'S TRUE ... BUT, ANYWAY ...
TAP
... I'D NEVER BE ABLE TO LET THE BOSS DOWN TO GO SOMEWHERE ELSE

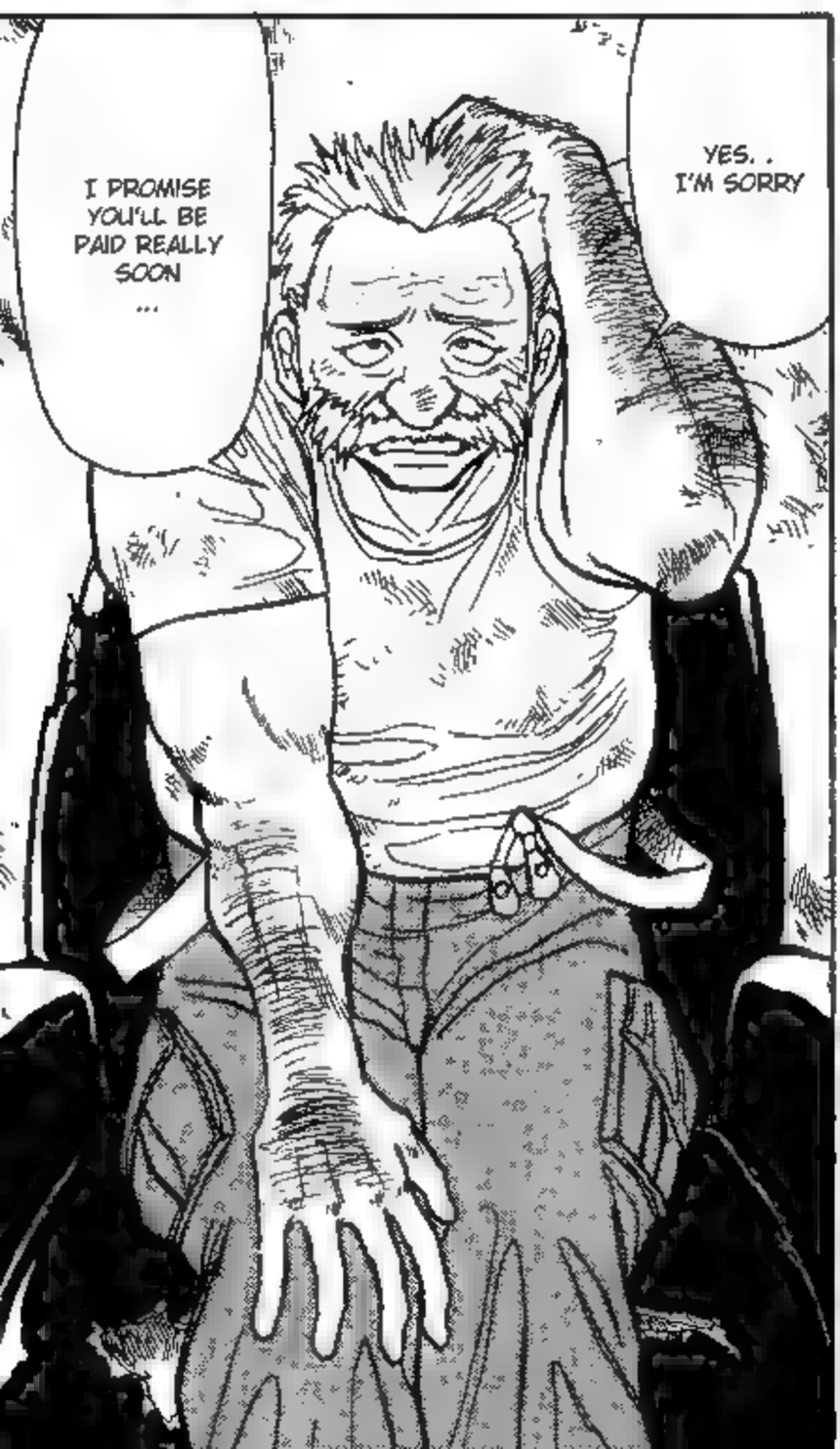
STILL ...
THE NAKAMACHI CIRCUS USED TO HAVE SOME SUCCESS
HE WELCOMED US...
ALTHOUGH WE WERE VERY YOUNG
HE'S THE ONE WHO TOOK CARE OF US 'TIL NOW. OUR PARENTS LEFT US ... HE'S OUR ONLY FAMILY

MAYBE THE ECONOMY WAS BETTER ...
THAT'S TRUE. ITS TOURS WERE FAMOUS

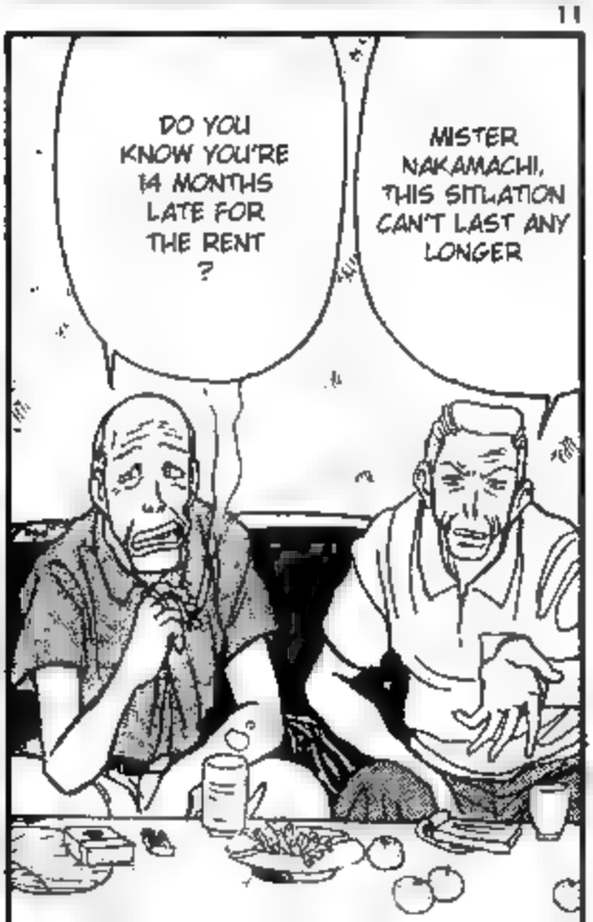
WE ENDED UP GOING BANKRUPT
YEAH ...
ANYWAY, ONE DAY ...

THE ROCK EATER!! FOR THE FIRST TIME IN JAPAN !!
... GIVING A SECOND LIFE ...
TO HIS CIRCUS ?


DO YOU THINK THE BOSS IS STILL DREAMING ABOUT ...
HM ...


I PROMISE YOU'LL BE PAID REALLY SOON ...
YES. . I'M SORRY

11


DO YOU KNOW YOU'RE 14 MONTHS LATE FOR THE RENT ?
MISTER NAKAMACHI, THIS SITUATION CAN'T LAST ANY LONGER

YOU'RE USING THAT PIECE OF LAND WITHOUT OUR AUTHORIZATION. WHAT'S ALL THAT STUFF?
THERE ARE ALSO MANY THINGS IN FRONT OF THE WARE-HOUSE YOU'RE RENTING!
HMM
HMM
BLA BLA
BLA BLA
THE TENT FOR YOUR CIRCUS ?! MISTER NAKAMACHI ... MAYBE YOU SHOULD FORGET ALL THAT, YOU KNOW?
I'M SORRY ... THAT'S THE TENT FOR MY CIRCUS ...
12
MISTER NAKAMACHI, YOU'RE WELL AWARE THAT ...
"BAZAAR" ?
WHAT ?
HE'S RIGHT! YOU SHOULD FIND A MORE SERIOUS JOB! WHY ARE YOU HOLDING ON TO THAT BAZAAR SO STRONGLY?

THE PAST, DOESN'T IT ?
ORCUS BELONGS TO...

BASTARDS! YOU REALLY THINK I'M GONNA LET SOMEONE TALK LIKE THAT IN FRONT OF ME ?!!

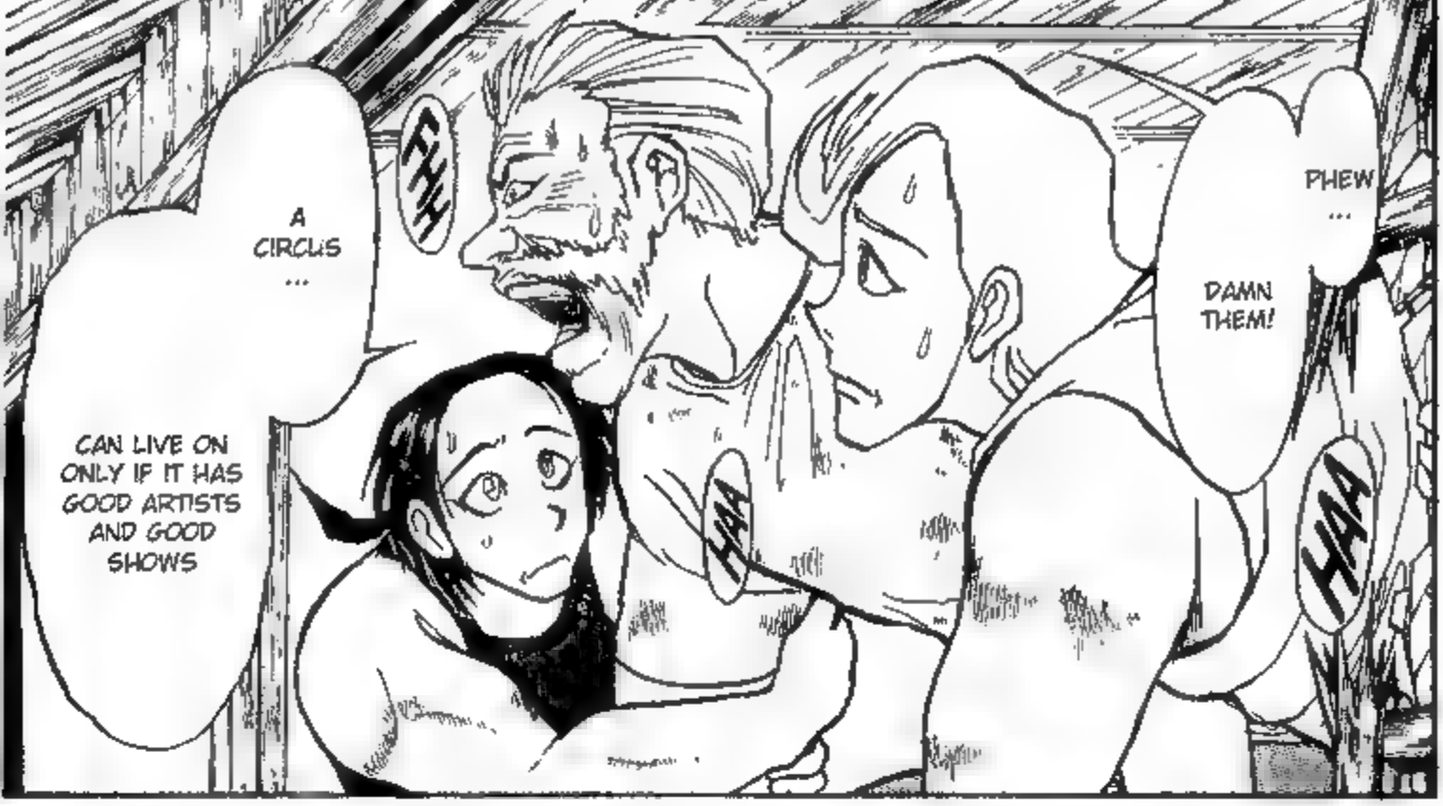
... WAIT !!
CALM DOWN BOSS !
DO YOU REALLY REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING ?!
BLING BLING

I'VE DEDICATED MY WHOLE LIFE TO THE CIRCUS! AND YOU DARE TO TELL ME THAT?!
... WHOOPS ...
BLAM BOM

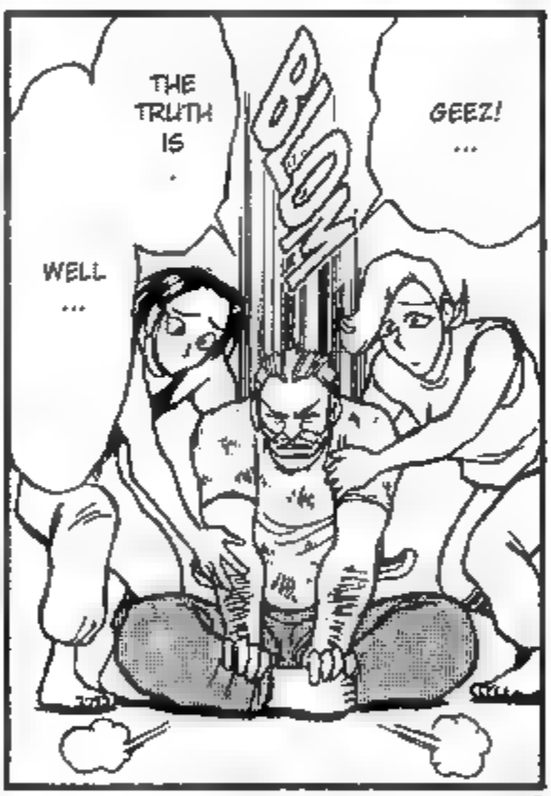
14

OUAAH
SHUT UP, JERKS!!
BLI ING

WE WILL SUE YOU !!
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE ?!
AND YOU WILL BE EXPELLED
DA DAANN

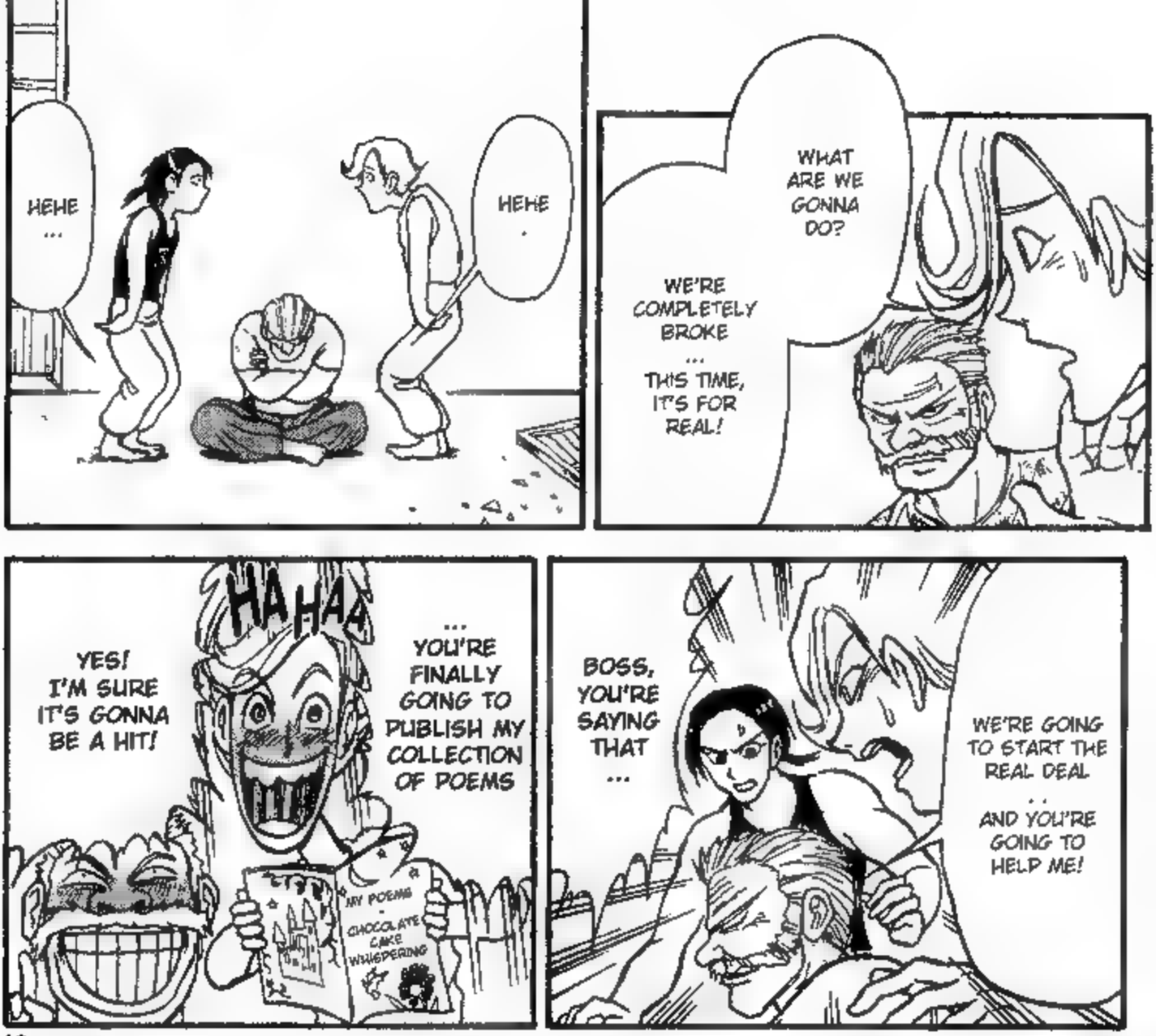

A CIRCUS ...
CAN LIVE ON ONLY IF IT HAS GOOD ARTISTS AND GOOD SHOWS
FHH
PHEW ...
DAMN THEM!
HHH

WE DON'T HAVE ANY MONEEEEEY!


THE TRUTH IS ...
WELL ...
BLOM
GEEZ! ...

BUT BOSS, YOU YELLED TOO!
IDIOTS! WHY ARE YOU YELLING LIKE THAT ?! DO YOU WANNA WAKE UP THE NEIGHBORS ?!!

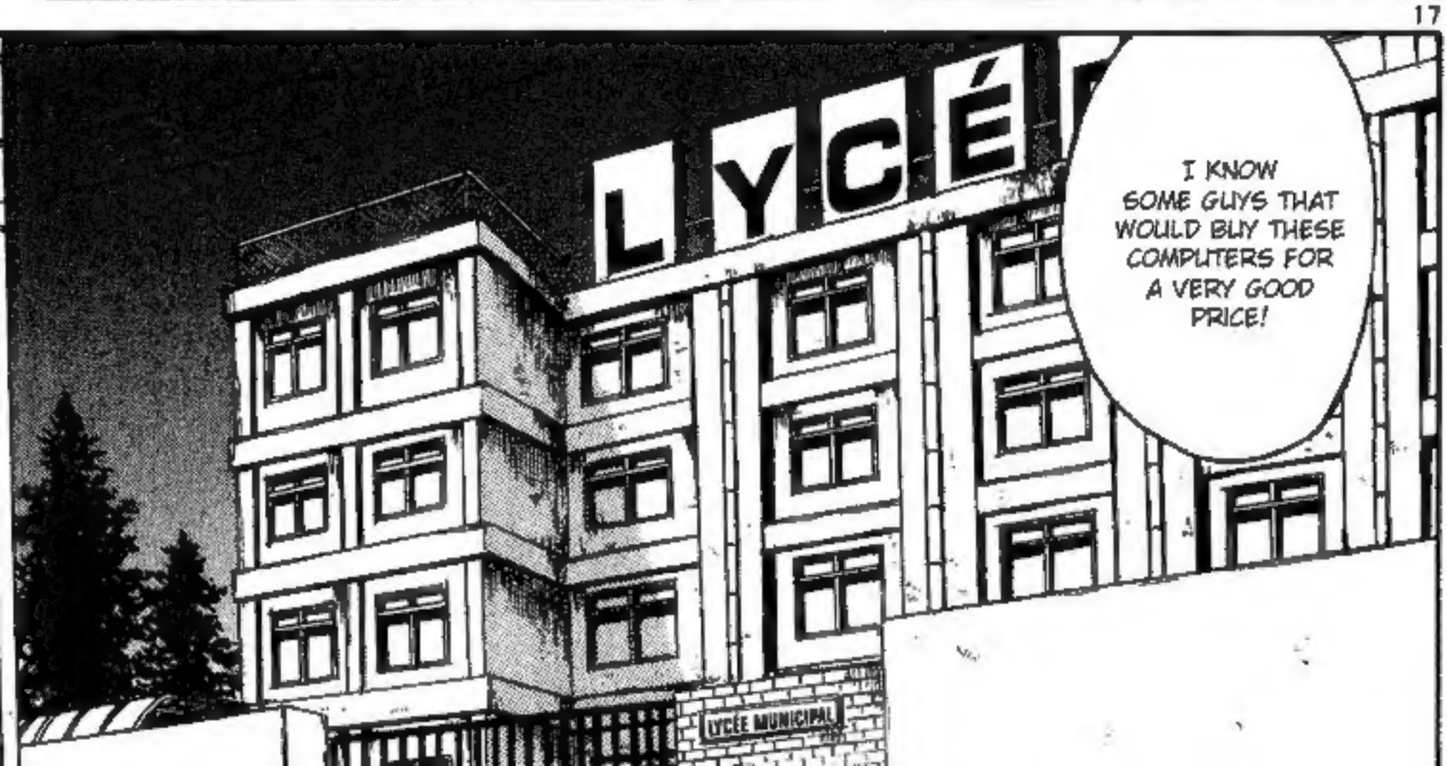
PIF
PAF

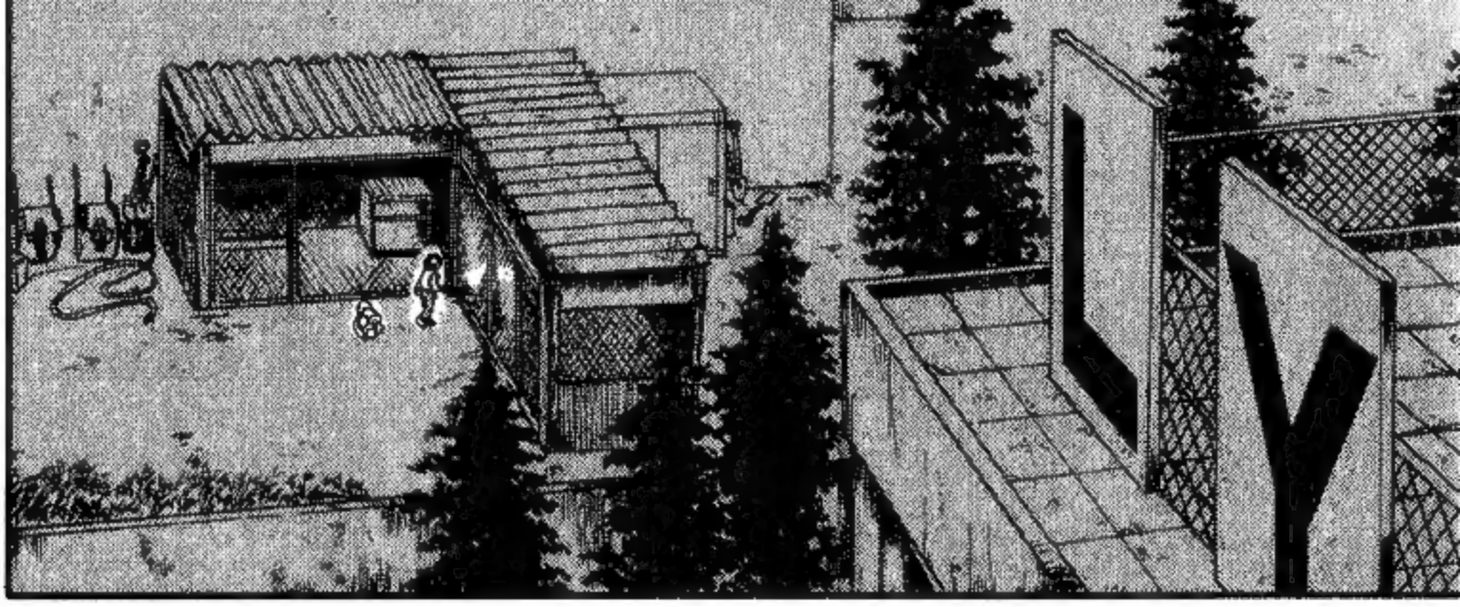

HEHE ...
HEHE .
WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO?
WE'RE COMPLETELY BROKE ... THIS TIME, IT'S FOR REAL!
HAHA
YES! I'M SURE IT'S GONNA BE A HIT!
... YOU'RE FINALLY GOING TO PUBLISH MY COLLECTION OF POEMS
MY POEMS - CHOCOLATE CAKE WHISPERING
BOSS, YOU'RE SAYING THAT ...
WE'RE GOING TO START THE REAL DEAL .. AND YOU'RE GOING TO HELP ME!

YOU REALLY HAVE STRANGE TASTES !!
WHAT A PITY!! ... WHAT HAVE I DONE TO END UP LIKE THIS WITH TWO LOSERS LIKE YOU?!
YES, GET BACK TO REALITY HIRO! WE SAID WE WERE TALKING ABOUT SERIOUS THINGS!
STOP DAY-DREAMING !!
BZOING
GOOD IDEA! IT WILL CERTAINLY BE AMONG THE TOP SALES!
HEÉÉ
... LIKE, FOR EXAMPLE THE PUBLICATION OF THE EXCELLENT NOVEL I'VE JUST WRITTEN!
ICE CUBE UNDER THE ROOF
HEHÉÉ

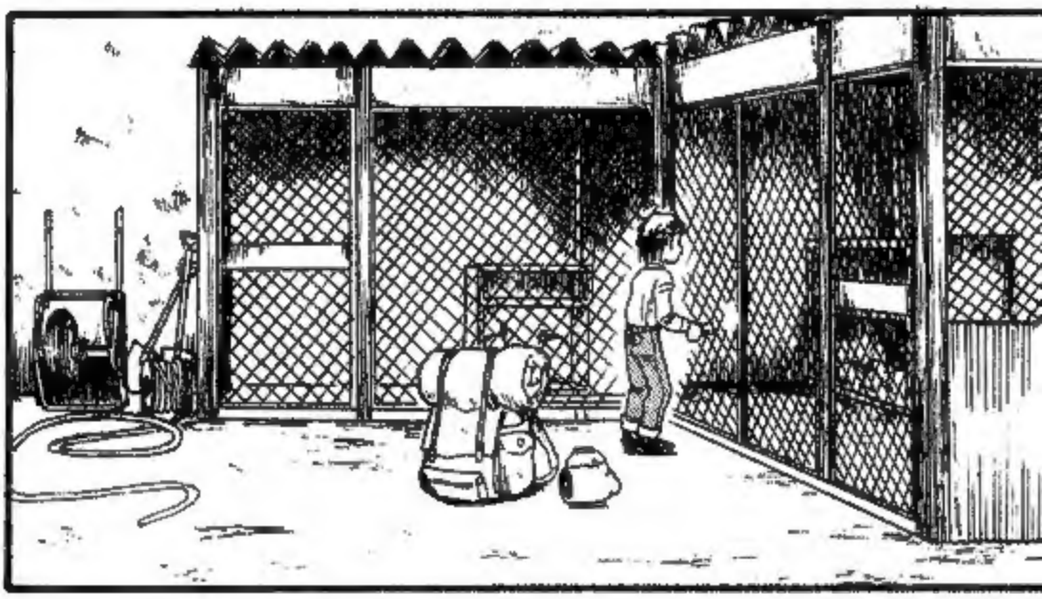
I TOLD YOU NOT TO YELL !
YOU YELLED EVEN LOUDER THAN WE DID ...
AS WE DON'T HAVE ANY MORE MONEY ... WE'LL GO TAKE IT WHERE IT IS ...
YES, EXACTLY !! WE'RE GOING TO STEAL IT !!

... COMPUTERS ?
I HEARD THAT THE HIGH SCHOOL NEARBY HAS JUST RENEWED ITS COMPUTERS
SO? WHERE ARE WE GOING ?
BOSS WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN WITH YOU!
BUT I CAN'T DRAG YOU INTO THIS

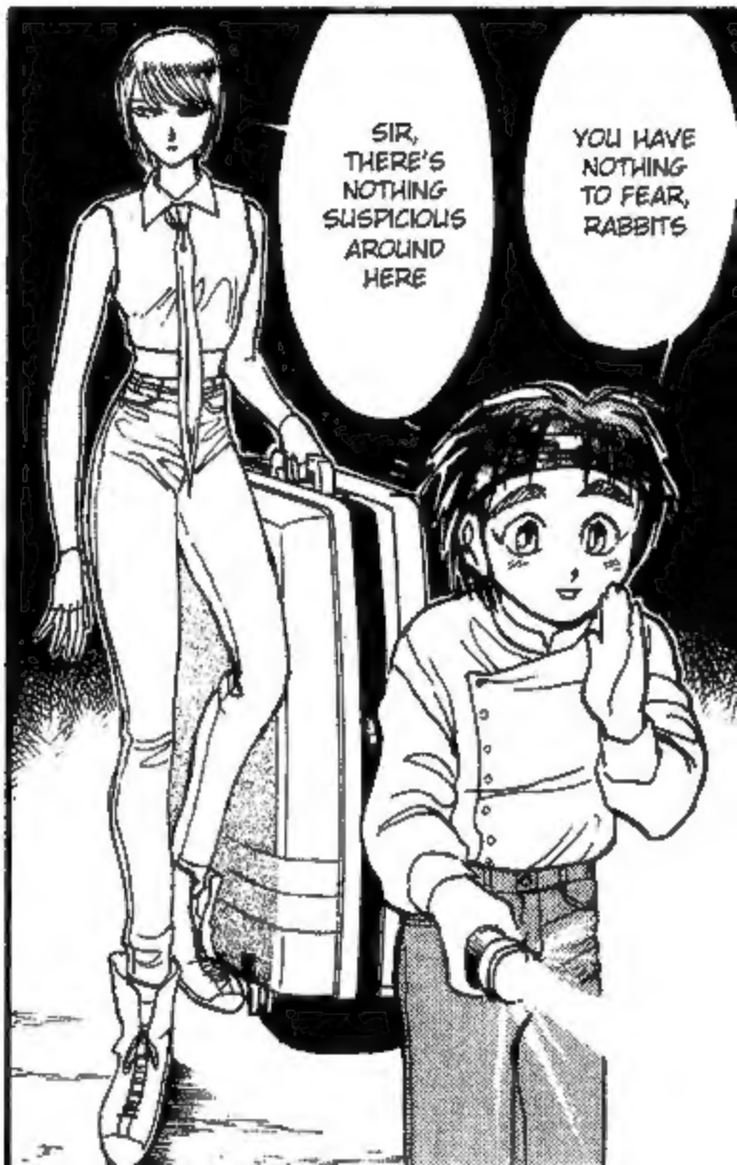

LYCÉ
LYCÉE MUNICIPAL
I KNOW SOME GUYS THAT WOULD BUY THESE COMPUTERS FOR A VERY GOOD PRICE!



WELL
...



I TOLD YOU SHIROGANE
...
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO COME, I CAN TAKE CARE OF THE RABBITS BY MYSELF

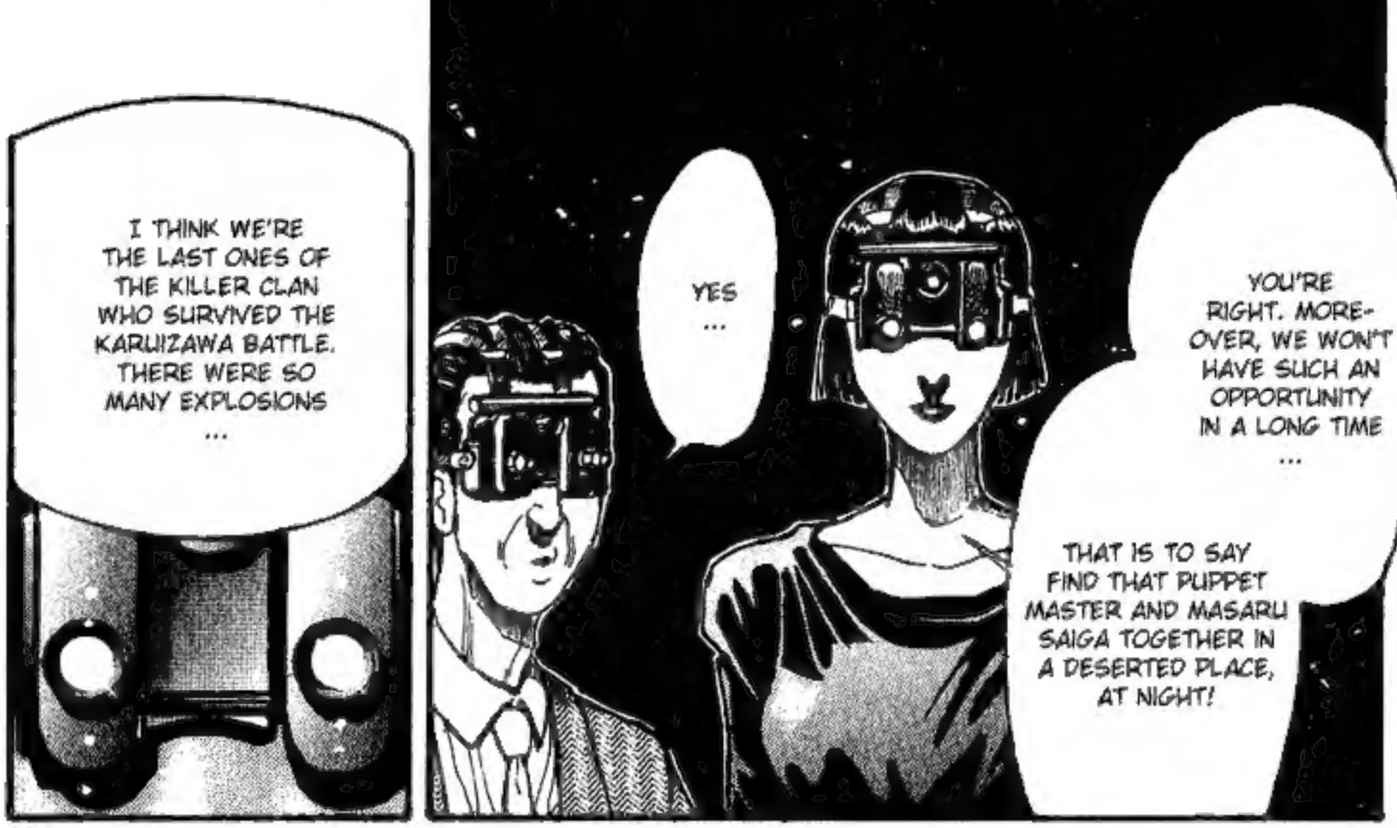

SIR, THERE'S NOTHING SUSPICIOUS AROUND HERE
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR, RABBITS

I'M SORRY MASTER
...
BUT I SWORE TO PROTECT YOU AT ANY COST

HE'S FUNNY WITH THAT GIRL ... HE MUST HAVE ASKED HER TO COME WITH HIM
... BEGGING AND CRYING AS USUAL
IT'S OK! ANYWAY, I FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE WITH YOU HERE
I APOLOGIZE

DURING DAYLIGHT WE CAN'T DO ANY-THING CUZ EVERY-BODY'S WATCHING. BUT TONIGHT, LUCK IS ON OUR SIDE!
MASARU IS PLAYING A LITTLE TOO HIGH NOW ... THAT'S WHY I'M GONNA HAVE TO BRING HIM BACK TO HIS PLACE
LOOK CAREFULLY FOLKS ...

IF THEY SEE US, WE'LL HAVE TO KILL THEM. BUT THEY MIGHT BE USEFUL AS HOSTAGES IN CASE SOMETHING GOES WRONG ...
LOOK ... THERE ARE OTHER BRATS OVER THERE. WHAT DO WE DO ?
WHAT ABOUT YOU ?
YEAH ...
YOU TWO, YOU'LL PREVENT THE GIRL FROM GETTING IN THE WAY, GOT IT ?!


I THINK WE'RE THE LAST ONES OF THE KILLER CLAN WHO SURVIVED THE KARUIZAWA BATTLE. THERE WERE SO MANY EXPLOSIONS ...
YES ...
YOU'RE RIGHT. MOREOVER, WE WON'T HAVE SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY IN A LONG TIME ...
THAT IS TO SAY FIND THAT PUPPET MASTER AND MASARU SAIGA TOGETHER IN A DESERTED PLACE, AT NIGHT!

IF WE WERE TO KILL MASARU SAIGA ...
... WE WOULD SHARE THE REWARD ONLY TWO WAYS!